

Clinical Cases.

RECOVERIES FROM INSANITY IN CASES ACCOMPANIED BY HÆMATOMA AURIS.

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Cases of insanity complicated by *hematoma auris*, or "insane ear," have so rarely terminated in complete recovery that the development of this complication has come to be regarded as sufficient to warrant an unfavorable prognosis in every case. In fact, authorities upon insanity, almost without exception, lay it down as a rule that a recovery is not to be expected in such cases; and it is possible that the acceptance of this belief may have led physicians to relax in their efforts to promote recovery, as is wont to be the case in diseases that are known to be incurable. Hence the importance of recording every favorable exception.

In the *Am. Journal of Insanity* for July, 1874, Dr. E. H. Van Deusen, then Superintendent of the Michigan State Lunatic Asylum, reported three cases of complete recovery from insanity associated with marked and unmistakable *hamatoma auris*.

The first of these cases occurred in the practice of Dr. William Teats, of the Coton Hill Institution, England, who reported it in the *British Medical Journal*, 1873.¹ The subject was a woman, aged 33 years, admitted to Coton Hill Institution in January, 1870, suffering from acute mania, first attack of about three months' duration, and characterized by marked suicidal, homicidal, destructive, and violent tendencies, and improper language. The case was regarded as hopeless. This condition continued until August, 1872, when the excitement gradually subsided, and by the middle of November she was considered perfectly sane.

The second case, reported in the same journal by Dr. Needham, of the Bootham Asylum, at York, was that of a young man, admitted to the Bootham Asylum in October, 1861, with acute mania of one week's duration. At the end of twelve months no improve-

¹ Dr. Van Deusen believes this to be the first case ever recorded.

ment had occurred, and the patient seemed to be rapidly drifting into dementia; there had been hæmatoma of both ears, with the characteristic effusion, absorption, and subsequent disfigurement. Suddenly there was a change for the better; the excitement abated, habits and mental condition began to improve, and at the end of sixteen months the patient was discharged fully recovered; and up to the time of making the report, upwards of ten years, he had remained perfectly well.

The third case was observed by Dr. Van Deusen himself. A robust young farmer, aged 21 years, was admitted to the Michigan Asylum in June, 1870. He was suffering from acute mania of about three weeks' duration; the attack was attributed to "partial sunstroke and business perplexities," and was characterized by extreme violence, marked bodily agitation, and destructive tendencies. Five weeks after admission, well marked hæmatoma occurred in both ears, passing through the usual stages, and terminating in the characteristic deformity. "In October, there was an abatement of the excitement, convalescence was established, and he was discharged recovered, February 15th, 1871. His health has continued good, as has been ascertained by occasional correspondence, and he has been actively engaged in business since his return home."

The following interesting case occurred in my own practice: Geo. C., *alias* P., aged 18 years, convict, was admitted to the N. Y. State Asylum for Insane Criminals, April 16th, 1880, suffering from acute mania of a somewhat violent type and of several weeks' duration. He recovered, and was discharged from the asylum November 11th, 1880; was readmitted on June 22d, 1881, at which time he was in a markedly maniacal state, continuing so during a greater part of the year. He was incoherent in speech, noisy, violent and filthy, smearing himself with excrement, denuding his person, and openly masturbating; also attempted self-mutilation. In August, 1881, commencing hæmatoma of both ears was observed. These developed rapidly, were apparently painless, and fluctuated indistinctly—the right being the larger. The swelling, in each, was confined to the concha, giving a very peculiar appearance. Absorption was rapid, and at the end of a month the tumors had nearly disappeared, leaving the usual induration and thickening.

At the same time the mental disturbance had gradually subsided, and convalescence was fairly established. The patient was returned to Auburn prison, recovered, September 30th, 1882, where he remained entirely free from mental disturbance, as I ascertained through occasional visits to him, until the expiration of his term of sentence to penal servitude, March 22d, 1884, when he was released.

These four cases comprise, I believe, all that have thus far been reported, although Dr. Clouston, in his admirable work on mental diseases, referring to hæmatoma auris, says: "I have seen only

three cases recover out of eighty cases who had *hæmatoma auris*.”¹ And again, the same author, in describing a case of adolescent insanity with *hæmatoma auris* followed by recovery, makes the following statement : “This was one of only about six patients that I have seen where recovery took place after a *hæmatoma* had formed, or even been threatened in any degree.”² Just how Dr. Clouston would explain this apparent discrepancy, the writer is unaware ; most likely it is a typographical error.

The foregoing cases are here presented in the hope that others, having similar cases, may be induced to report them, and that, in this way, sufficient evidence may be obtained to warrant a more hopeful prognosis, and, consequently, a more assiduous application of curative measures in cases of insanity complicated by *hæmatoma auris*.

¹ “ Clinical Lectures on Mental Diseases,” p. 265.

² Op. cit., p. 380.